



Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, My name is Kari Bloom, and I'm a consumer Employer that used Money Follows the Person to be able to come home from a nursing home 5 years ago. I have 3 PCAs.

My PCAs give me a quality of life and the independence that I deserve to have. I'm able to be *myself*, living out in the community, which is where I want to be. My PCAs help me get out of bed, shower, clean the things I can't reach, do my laundry, meet me at the grocery store or Wal-Mart to do my shopping, and a hundred other things. They are my lifeline and without them I could not live independently. I have grown children, but it wouldn't be fair to them to stop living their lives to care for me, so I'm thankful, grateful & humbled to have access to this program. There are no words to describe what this program has meant to me and it has given me my life back.

However, there are challenges that impact both my PCAs and me as a consumer employer. Allowing Allied to process 6,000 timesheets late per year is unacceptable. No one can expect those of us with disabilities and our caregivers to stay quiet on this issue. No one should be treated this way.

For example, one of my PCAs who has been working for a month has only been paid 2 out of the 4 checks she's owed. She was paid on the 17th of January, but then not paid on the 24th or the 31st and then paid again on the 7th of February. Unfortunately, when we called Allied we determined two of the checks were returned to Allied because her name wasn't on her mailbox. Allied promised to reprint and mail the checks again but she still has not received them, so she is still owed several hundred dollars from Allied which is making it impossible to pay her bills or her rent and putting strain on her family.

My daughter is also a PCA for me, and is still waiting for her W-2. When she called Allied, they admitted they'd made a typo on her change of address. Now, it's mid-February, and my daughter still hasn't received her W-2 which means she can't file her taxes which would allow her to pay a big bill that she owes and is waiting on her refund to pay.

As the consumer employer, I dread calling Allied because I know I'll be on hold for 15-45 minutes each time. When our PCAs don't get paid and call us in tears, not only is it a hardship on our PCAs, but it causes me stress and it takes an unfair toll on MY health. I don't understand how a company can function this way. We're told what to do, and as consumer employers and PCAs we do our job correctly. But Allied can't fulfill the same thing they expect of us. We're asking for your help to put the fire under Allied's feet and make sure they're doing their job correctly as a state contractor. Our lives as consumers AND our PCAs' livelihoods depends on it.

Thank you for your time.